

# **MULTI-NATIONAL DIVISION – BAGHDAD**

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## **IA unit takes lead in another section of the ‘Warhorse’ area of operations**

Maj. Anna Friederich  
2nd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

FOB KALSU, Iraq – On a very austere camp on the southeast side of Forward Operating Base Iskandariyah in the northern Babil province, Iraqi Soldiers assembled for an event that would have been unlikely three years ago.

Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 4th Brigade, 8th Iraqi Army Division, unfurled their colors today during a ceremony to celebrate taking the lead in another section of 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division’s area of operations.

The 2nd Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, 2nd BCT, 4th Inf. Div., transferred security operations in the cities of Al Iskandariyah, Haswah and Al Khudir, a 90 square-mile area, to Iraqi control after months of mentoring and training of the battalion.

The Soldiers of 2nd Bn., 8th Inf. Regt., took over the task of training the fledgling unit just under a year ago. During that time, the unit reached a “Level 2” Training Readiness Assessment rating, meaning that the IA has assumed the lead in combat

operations in its designated area with Multi-National Division – Baghdad forces maintaining a supportive role.

The IA battalion has shown an ability to decisively engage and defeat the terrorist organizations and bring security to the local people on its own during numerous operations, said Maj. Austin Appleton, IA liaison officer, 2nd BCT. Additionally, the unit has shown the flexibility to quickly support the local people through the distribution of water, humanitarian aids and other civil military programs.

A year ago, seven battalions owned operational area. There are now two IA divisions, nine IA brigades, and 24 IA battalions in the lead within MND-B's area of operations. Although security efforts in the area are now the responsibility of 2nd Bn., 4th Bde., 8th IAD, MND-B Soldiers will continue coaching and mentoring the unit.

The ceremony kicked off with a reading from the Quran by a local cleric and an inspection of troops by Col. John Tully, commander, 2nd BCT, and Brig. Gen. Imad Majhool, commander, 4th Bde., 8th IAD.

Hasoon Al Fatlawi, the deputy governor of Babil Province, was the first to praise the progress of the battalion in a speech, citing the diligence and dedication by the soldiers and leaders. Hasoon said he was very proud of every officer, sergeant and soldier, and he feels the battalion was able to reach this point through the efforts and hard work of every member of the unit.

“This battalion has proven itself many times over in operations alongside and independent of Coalition Forces, and I am confident our successes will multiply as we take control of security operations in the area,” he said.

Tully also praised the battalion's performance over the past year.

“Today is a significant step on the Iraqi army’s journey to bring peace and stability to Iraq,” he said, “It marks a step closer to normalcy and eventual transition to full civilian control.

“Today’s transition does not mean the Coalition Forces go away. It means the Iraqi Army is in the lead and that we move to a support role. We remain team members and partners; the time is right for the Iraqi army to take the lead in north Babil,” said Tully.

The Iraqi army is growing stronger every day, he added.

The ceremony concluded with a presentation of gifts to CFs from IA soldiers and a pass and review by the soldiers of 2nd Bn, 8th IAD, before the audience of ISF and MND-B leadership, town council members and well-wishers.



### **Troop the Line.**

FOB KALSU, Iraq – Col. John Tully, commander, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, and Brig. Gen. Imad Majhool, commander, 4th Bde., 8th Iraqi Army Division, "troop the line" during an Iraqi in the Lead ceremony Thursday at the 2nd Battalion, 4th Bde., 8th IAD compound near Forward Operating Base Iskandariyah in the northern Babil province.

(U.S. Army photo by Maj. Anna Friederich, 2nd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.)



### **Pass and Review.**

FOB KALSU, Iraq – Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 4th Brigade, 8th Iraqi Army Division, march to cadence before their chain of command, Iraqi police, city council members and well-wishers during an Iraqi in the Lead ceremony Thursday at the 2nd Bn., 4th Bde., 8th IAD compound near Forward Operating Base Iskandariyah in the northern Babil province.

(U.S. Army photo by Maj. Anna Friederich, 2nd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.)



**Unfurling the Colors.**

FOB KALSU, Iraq – A soldier from 2nd Battalion, 4th Brigade, 8th Iraqi Army Division, unfurls the unit's colors during an Iraqi in the Lead ceremony Thursday at the 2nd Bn., 4th Bde., 8th IAD compound near Forward Operating Base Iskandariyah in the northern Babil province.

(U.S. Army photo by Maj. Anna Friederich, 2nd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.)